

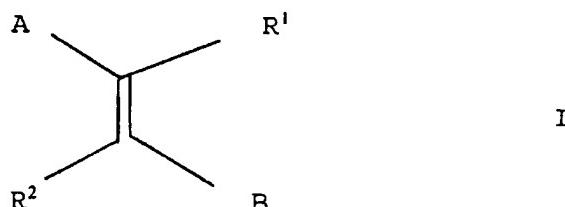
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CLAIMS

1. A method of preparing a first polymeric compound which comprises providing a compound of general formula

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or a salt thereof where A and B are the same or different and at least one comprises a relatively polar atom or group and R¹ and R² independently comprise relatively non-polar atoms or groups, in a solvent of a type in which ethene itself is generally insoluble and causing the groups C=C in said compound to react with one another to form a polymeric structure.

20 2. A method according to claim 1, wherein R¹ and R² are independently selected from a hydrogen atom or an optionally substituted alkyl group.

25 3. A method according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein said solvent is a polar solvent.

4. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein said compound of general formula I is provided in said solvent at a concentration at which molecules of said compound aggregate.

30 5. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein the groups C=C in said compound are caused to react in a photochemical reaction.

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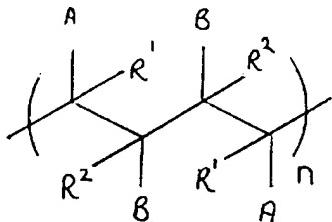
6. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein A and B are independently selected from optionally-substituted alkyl, cycloalkyl, cycloalkenyl, cycloalkynyl, aromatic and heteroaromatic groups.

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7. A method according to any preceding claim, wherein A and B each independently represent optionally-substituted aromatic or heteroaromatic groups.

10 8. A novel first polymeric compound having the formula

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wherein A and B are the same or different and at least one comprises a relatively polar atom or group, R¹ and R² independently comprise relatively non-polar atoms or groups and n is an integer.

9. A method of preparing a formulation comprising providing a first polymeric compound prepared in a method according to any of claims 1 to 7 or according to claim 8 in a solvent together with a second polymeric compound and intimately mixing the compounds.

10. A method according to claim 9, wherein said second polymeric compound includes one or more functional groups capable of reacting with said first polymeric compound.

11. A method according to claim 9 or claim 10, wherein said second polymeric compound is selected from optionally substituted polyvinylalcohol, polyvinylacetate,

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polyalkylene glycols and collagen (and any component thereof).

12. A formulation comprising a first polymeric compound
5 prepared in a process according to any of claims 1 to 7 or
as described in claim 8 and a second compound as described
in any of claims 9 to 11.

13. A method of preparing a material, the method
10 comprising providing a mixture prepared as described in
any of claims 9 to 11 or a formulation according to claim
12 in a solvent and causing the first and second compounds
to react with one another.

15 14. A method according to claim 13, wherein an acid is
provided.

15. A method of collecting and/or isolating and/or
emulsifying oil (or the like) which comprises contacting
20 oil (or the like) with a reaction mixture according to
claim 13 or claim 14 so that said oil (or the like)
becomes incorporated into a material which forms.

16. A material preparable by a method according to any of
25 claims 13 to 15.